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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Eighth periodic report submitted by Mauritius under article 18 of the Convention pursuant to the simplified reporting procedure, due in 2018*

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List of abbreviations

AAP	Africa Adaptation Programme
AHRIM	Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice
BEPS	Base Erosion and Profit Shifting
BRP	Basic Retirement Pension
CAB	Citizen Advice Bureau
CCMCAA	Country by Country Reporting Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement
CCIC	Climate Change Information Centre
CDU	Child Development Unit
CRS	Common Reporting Standard
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
DOVIS	Domestic Violence Information System
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
EID	Early Infant Diagnosis
EReA	Employment Relations Act
ERiA	Employment Rights Act
EWEAS	Early Warning and Emergency Alert System
EWS	Early Warning System
FATCA	Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act
FWPU	Family Welfare and Protection Unit
FSW	Female Sex Workers
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GSWPFEA	Grand Sable Women Planters Farmers Entrepreneurs Association
HTC	HIV Testing and Counselling
IES	Inspection and Enforcement Section
IJLS	Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LGBT	Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender
MEHRTESR	Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
MESD	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development

MFC	Muslim Family Council
MFPWA	Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association
MGECDFW	Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
MITD	Mauritius Institute of Training and Development
MLIRT	Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Training
MMS	Mauritius Meteorological Services
MOHQL	Ministry of Health and Quality of Life
MPF	Mauritius Police Force
MSM	Men who have Sex with Men
MSIEE	Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
MSME	Micro Small and Medium Enterprise
MSSNSESD	Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions for Low Carbon Island Development Strategy
NAP	National HIV and AIDS Action Plan
NECS	National Education Counselling Service
NGM	National Gender Machinery
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGPF	National Gender Policy Framework
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NMRF	National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up
NPA	National Plan of Action
NRB	National Remuneration Board
NSCGM	National Steering Committee on Gender Mainstreaming
NSF	National Strategic Framework
NWC	National Women's Council
NWEC	National Women Entrepreneur Council
ODPP	Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
PFPU	Police Family Protection Unit
PGC	Parliamentary Gender Caucus
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PRB	Pay Research Bureau

PrEP	Pre-Exposure Prophylactic Treatment
PITC	Provider Initiated Testing and Counselling
PTS	Police Training School
PWID	People Who Inject Drugs
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
SMEDA	Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority
SMWU	Special Migrant Workers Unit
SRM	Social Registrar of Mauritius
TIP	Trafficking In Persons
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ZEP	Zone d'Education Prioritaire

Introduction

1. In accordance with article 18, paragraph 1(b) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Republic of Mauritius submits its eighth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention covering the period 2010 to 2018.

2. The report is compiled in the form of answers to a list of questions provided to Mauritius by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women prior to the submission of the eighth periodic report (CEDAW/C/MUS/QPR/8) and also takes into account the concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/MUS/CO/6-7).

3. The report has been prepared by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (MGECDFW) in collaboration with the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF) and other government agencies. The National Women's Council, the National Women Entrepreneur Council and the National Human Rights Institutions such as National Human Rights Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission, Office of the Ombudsman and the Ombudsperson for Children, were also consulted during the preparation of the report. Views of NGOs and civil society have also been taken on board while preparing the present report.

4. The report contains information on the legislative, administrative and other measures adopted by the Republic of Mauritius to implement the provisions of the Convention. It reflects the progress achieved in the advancement of women in the Republic of Mauritius during the reporting period as well as information on the remaining challenges in that area.

General

5. The Government of the Republic of Mauritius is fully committed to achieving social justice, gender equity and equality. The Government of Mauritius adopted the National Gender Policy Framework (NGPF) in 2008. The NGPF aims to strengthen accountability and coherence across government and non-State actors to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in line with human rights treaty obligations and intergovernmental policy commitments.

6. As at the end of 2017, 1,265,309 persons reside in the Republic of Mauritius, 626,088 males and 639,221 females (Statistics Mauritius). Women make up 50.5 per cent of the population and 37.7 per cent of all individuals employed in the country (based on 545,100 employment at the end of year 2017). More detailed statistics are included in the Appendix.

7. Over the reporting period, the Republic of Mauritius adopted administrative, legal, organizational as well as policy measures to improve the status of women and protect their rights and interests, which made it possible to make substantial progress towards achieving equal rights and opportunities within the country.

8. Statistics on women and children victims of violence are kept at different and separate levels at the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (MGECDFW), the Police Records Office, with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and also with NGOs. The MGECDFW is working on the design of a holistic system that will capture realistic and updated statistics on cases of gender based violence and violence against children that can guide policymaking. In this respect, the service of a consultant has been retained to:

- Undertake a statistical capacity development for gender analysis;

- Strengthen national capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate statistics on children to significantly increase institutional understanding and encourage systemic production of official gender statistics and statistics on children as well as related indicators at national level including Rodrigues.

Constitutional, legislative and institutional framework

9. A number of national legislations have been passed which already incorporate most of the principles found in the Convention. Furthermore, the Constitution, which is the supreme law of the country, prohibits discrimination on inter alia, the ground of sex.

10. The functions of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)are provided for in the Protection of Human Rights Act which was amended in 2012 to, inter alia, cater for the obligations of Mauritius under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture in as much as the amendment aims at providing a National Preventive Mechanism to be set up within the National Human Rights Commission and at enabling the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to discharge its functions under the Optional Protocol in Mauritius. However, with the recent coming into force of the Independent Police Complaints Commission Act, the Police Complaints Commission Act which provided for the setting up of the Police Complaints Division within the NHRC, has been repealed.

11. Otherwise, the amendment to the Protection of Human Rights Act equally provides for the setting up within the National Human Rights Commission, of a Police Complaints Division to investigate complaints made against members of the Police Force, other than allegations of corruption and money laundering. The Police Complaints Division is also empowered to investigate the death of any person which has occurred whilst in police custody or as a result of police action and to advise on ways in which any police misconduct may be addressed and eliminated. The functions of the NHRC and its mandate have been broadened so as to ensure better promotion and protection of human rights. The NHRC is now empowered to review safeguards provided by or under any enactment for the protection of human rights. The functions of the NHRC also include the promotion of the harmonisation of national legislation and practices with the international human rights instruments to which Mauritius is a party, and ensuring their effective implementation. The NHRC has also been given the autonomy to engage suitable persons or bodies to enable it to discharge the specific functions of each Division in an independent manner.

12. The National Human Rights Action Plan 2012–2020 aims at strengthening the National Human Rights Framework to protect and safeguard civil and political rights and secure greater realization of economic, social and cultural rights. It advocates a number of measures, amongst which:

- The strengthening of international cooperation on human rights through ratification of human rights instruments and domestication of human rights treaties;
- A greater realisation of economic, social and cultural rights;
- The strengthening of women's rights in the context of equal opportunities;
- A better protection and safeguarding of the rights of vulnerable persons including children, older persons, persons with disabilities and persons living in poverty as well as securing the right to sustainable development.

13. A Human Rights Monitoring Committee comprising all human rights stakeholders including non-governmental organizations, Ministries and Departments, National Human Rights Institutions and the private sector, has been set up by the Prime Minister's Office to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the National Action Plan. A database of human rights structural process and outcome indicators is being prepared.

14. The Equal Opportunities Act provides for equal access to opportunities as it incorporates all the different grounds of discrimination covered under section 3 and 16 of the Constitution as well as age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex and sexual orientation in areas dealing with employment, education, the provision of accommodation, goods, services and other facilities, sports, the disposal of immovable property, admission to private clubs and premises open to the public. The Equal Opportunities Act was amended in 2011 to enable the setting up of an Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) in April 2012 to eliminate discrimination in all sectors as well as to promote good relations between people of different status. The EOC safeguards and protects the rights of all citizens, including women and girls. The EOC not only examines and investigates into complaints referred to it but it equally investigates into cases where it believes that an act of discrimination may have been or may be committed. Furthermore, the EOC has published guidelines and codes of conduct for all employers, both from the public and private sectors, in view of the implementation of an equal opportunity policy by all employers, which is a mandatory requirement under the Equal Opportunities Act. The EOC has the duty to attempt resolving matters through conciliation, in line with its commitments to the promotion of good relations between persons of different status. An Equal Opportunities Tribunal has also been set up. In cases where the conciliatory procedure fails at the level of the EOC, the latter, may with the consent of the complainant refer the matter to the Equal Opportunities Tribunal which has the power to issue orders, directives and make compensatory awards. The EOC may also apply for interim orders before the Equal Opportunities Tribunal should the circumstances require urgent intervention in the public interest and in order .o prevent further prejudice being caused to aggrieved parties. The Equal Opportunities Act was amended in November 2017 to make provision for the prohibition of discrimination in employment on the grounds of a person's criminal record, both at recruitment and promotion level.

15. Statistics on complaints received at the EOC on the basis of sex, with effect from 1st May 2016 to date, are indicated in the tables below:

Status of Complaints	*Number of Complaints*
Examined	60
Withdrawn	14
Assessment on going (Additional Information requested)	7
Pending investigation	11
Total number of complaints received	**92**

Source: EOC.

Details of complaints examined

Status	*Number of cases*
Conciliated/settled	16
Time barred	2

Status	*Number of cases*
Not under purview	8
No evidence of discrimination	22
Under investigation	9
Referred to Equal Opportunities Tribunal	3
Total number of complaints received	**60**

Source: EOC.

16. No reference was made to CEDAW in any cases lodged before the EOC concerning discrimination on the basis of sex.

17. There is also the newly established Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) which has come into operation since 9th April 2018. One of the functions of the IPCC is to investigate into any complaint made by any person or on his/her behalf against any act, conduct or omission of a police officer in the discharge of his/her functions, other than a complaint of an act of corruption or a money laundering offence.

Access to justice

18. The Government of the Republic of Mauritius has enacted a series of legislations to protect human rights including women's rights, as well as to ensure the protection of disadvantaged groups of women (including rural women, elderly women and women with disabilities). The Constitution makes provision under section 17 for redress to be afforded by the Supreme Court to any individual whose rights under Chapter II (which provides for fundamental rights and freedom) have been or are being or are likely to be contravened. Acts of public bodies may also be challenged in Court by way of applications for Judicial Review on grounds of illegality.

19. According to the Protection of Human Rights Act, any person who alleges that any of the human rights enshrined in the Constitution has been violated or is likely to be violated by a public officer can make a written complaint to the NHRC and seek redress.

20. The EOC safeguards and protects the rights of all citizens, including women and girls.

21. Members of the legal profession have been sensitized specifically about the Convention through lectures dispensed in February 2018 at the Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies (IJLS).

22. The Convention was also referred to in the case of C. Henriksen v/s The State 2012 SCJ 271 where the accused who was prosecuted before the Intermediate Court for the offence of wounds and blows causing death without intention to kill, invoked a defence of provocation and the defence counsel referred to Article 2 of the Convention.

23. Otherwise, there is no known case of discrimination against women having been lodged before the courts.

Women and peace and security

24. Currently, Mauritius does not have a National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.Mauritius does not have women or children living in situations of armed conflicts or under foreign occupation or refugee women or children in need of international protection and internationally displaced women and children. Mauritius is not involved in any armed conflict. The issue of obstacles to the participation of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution efforts is therefore not applicable to Mauritius.

National machinery for the advancement of women

25. The MGECDFW acts as the National Gender Machinery in Mauritius, with a functional Gender Unit. The mandate of the Gender Unit is grounded in the principles of equality as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Gender Unit works towards the social, economic and political empowerment of women and aims at addressing prevailing gender disparities. To this end, the Gender Unit has adopted a multi-pronged approach geared towards the following:

- Acting as National Gender Machinery (NGM) to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the policies, programmes of line Ministries;
- Implementing policies for women's empowerment through a network of 15 Women Empowerment Centres;
- Building the capacity of various partners on issues pertaining to gender;
- Conducting aggressive sensitisation campaigns for the benefit of various partners;
- Networking with organisations working for women's empowerment.

26. The Concluding Remarks were shared and disseminated with the Gender Focal Points (GFPs) of all Ministries at the 3rd meeting of the National Steering Committee on Gender Mainstreaming held on 16 February 2012. Further to that, the Gender Unit organised a full day seminar on CEDAW, whereby GFPs were apprised on what is CEDAW; its pertinence; the Optional Protocol as well as the Concluding Remarks. The seminar was held on 11 September 2012 with Mrs P. Patten, then member of the CEDAW Committee as resource person. The objective was to familiarise participants on CEDAW, its implications, the State's obligations as well as sharing regional and international experiences on the implementation of the Convention. The Gender Unit has intensified its interventions on various fronts to ensure that the concluding recommendations of the last CEDAW Committee (CEDAW/C/MUS/CO/6-7) are successfully addressed. Some of its key achievements from November 2011 to November 2017 are:

- Since July 2010, a National Steering Committee on Gender Mainstreaming (NSCGM) was set up to provide a platform for GFPs of all Ministries to dialogue on the gender implications in their respective sectors. This mechanism has enabled the MGECDFW to keep track of the challenges being faced by GFPs. The terms of reference of this committee also led to the setting up of the Gender Cells "in lieu" of GFP mechanism. Both the NSCGM and the Gender Cells are concrete measures that the Gender Unit initiated to ensure that gender was being mainstreamed in policies and programmes;

- High level capacity building programmes have been implemented for the benefit of GFPs aimed at equipping them with knowledge and tools on gender mainstreaming;
- GFPs were briefed on international and regional Human Rights Instruments such as the CEDAW, African Union frameworks, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and the COMESA Charter amongst others. The overall rationale was to ensure that sectoral interventions were aligned with these commitments;
- The Gender Unit published two compendiums that were distributed to all GFPs and were uploaded on the website of the MGECDFW;
- The Gender Unit, has over the last years, introduced a number of innovative and interactive tools that aim at raising awareness on the gender concept for the public at large as well as other stakeholders, namely public officers, trade unions, the Police and Prison Departments and secondary students. Other information, education and communication activities include inter alia effective public speaking on gender issues, walk the talk, motivational speeches by international speakers, and simulation of the Commission on the Status of Women for the youth, including several user-friendly publications on the gender implications of different thematics;
- The Gender Unit introduced innovative courses geared towards the empowerment of women and young girls in the Women Empowerment Centres. The overall objective was to impart knowledge and skills to young women and girls; whilst doing away with traditional and stereotypical courses that have been offered in the last decades. Such courses vary from personal development; getting ready to work; your safety-your concern to electrical repairs and mobile legal advice. The Gender Unit also raised awareness on gender-related issues which include inter alia, dissemination of SDGs, climate change as well as health related topics and sexual and reproductive health. Since the adoption of the SDGs, the Gender Unit has aligned its policies and programmes towards attaining the set targets of Agenda 2030, in particular SDG 5: "Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all girls and women" and the MGECDFW organised a National Dialogue pertaining to the same subject on International Women's Day 2016. A Training of Trainers on the Sustainable Development Goals was also held on 22 April 2016 and around 30 participants were trained on the goals of the SDGs so that they may disseminate the information amongst the public;
- Particular attention has also been given to girls from deprived regions as the latter usually do not participate in and as such do not benefit from the programmes offered. The Gender Unit enlisted the partnership of various stakeholders and/or NGOs who acted as facilitators for the beneficiaries and the latter also collaborated as resource persons.

27. The National Women's Council (NWC) is a parastatal body that operates under the aegis of the MGECDFW. There are currently 1,027 Women's Associations affiliated to the NWC through 4 Regional Committees (excluding Rodrigues). Members of these women's associations are encouraged to attend awareness campaigns on the following topics:

Areas of Women's Empowerment	*Number of persons reached (Jan-Dec 2017)*	*Objectives*
Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)	2 662	Increase awareness of women and young girls on the SDGs and how they could contribute to bring about sustainable development.

Areas of Women's Empowerment	*Number of persons reached (Jan-Dec 2017)*	*Objectives*
Gender Concept	5 515	Increase awareness of women and young girls on their rights and of the need for a change in mind set.
Gender Based Violence	770	Raise awareness of women and young girls on the Protection of Domestic Violence Act.
Climate Change	3 075	Raise awareness of women and young girls on the environment, of protection training and how to take appropriate action when there is a natural disaster.
Disaster Management	63	
HIV	9 174	Raise awareness of women and young girls on the causes of HIV and how to decrease stigmatisation about HIV positive people.
Total	**21 259**	

Source: National Women Council.

Extraterritorial obligations

28. Mauritius has put in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure that information on ownership, accounting information and banking information are always maintained by all businesses registered in the country, including companies, trusts, private foundations and partnerships, and can be accessed by the Government authorities and can also be shared with foreign authorities. The fact that Mauritius has instituted a system that is effective, efficient and compliant with the international standards for the recording and exchanging of ownership, accounting and banking information is fully recognized by international standard setters like the OECD. Following an in-depth peer review exercise conducted by the OECD Global Forum, Mauritius was allocated a rating of compliant with the international standards on transparency and exchange of information.

29. A number of measures aimed at ensuring transparency as well as a proper system for international collaboration and exchange of information are in place in view of preventing tax evasion and avoidance. These include:

- Mauritius has signed 50 Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements all of which contain provisions aimed at combatting tax fraud and tax evasion and also provide a mechanism for exchange of information;
- Mauritius has joined the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes;
- Mauritius has signed the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters and has adopted the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) on automatic exchange of information;
- Mauritius has signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement with the USA to implement the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA);
- Mauritius has signed the Country by Country Reporting Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement (CbCMCAA);
- Mauritius is a member of the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Inclusive Framework;

- Mauritius is a signatory of the Multilateral Convention to implement tax treaty related BEPS measures;
- Mauritius has committed to the comprehensive BEPS package and to its consistent implementation.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

30. Since the adoption of the State party's National Gender Policy Framework (NGPF) in 2008 and the last Periodic Report, the Gender Unit has been conducting monthly awareness sessions on the concept of gender equality with young men and boys (students), men and women from all walks of life including professionals from the private sector. Similarly, sensitization and capacity building programmes have been conducted with new recruits of the public sector, technical and administrative cadres, Police and Prison Officers. This is an on-going process and several information and educational tools have been developed to innovate awareness raising strategies. With the support of the Commonwealth of Learning, interactive DVDs were produced in 2011 and these are still used in awareness campaigns; one of which deals with addressing gender inequality and discrimination based on sex. Moreover, the MGECDFW has been using common board games, role-playing games and pictures since 2015 as medium/support for awareness raising. At national level, the MGECDFW has made use of billboards and public buses to sensitize the public on gender equality.

31. For reporting purposes, the MGECDFW keeps records of the number of beneficiaries sensitized. Since 2012 till date some 15,546 men, 64,524 women, 14,646 girls and 10,860 boys have been reached. No mechanism has, however, been put in place to measure the impact and results of the campaigns.

32. The MGECDFW also launched the Men As Caring Partners Project through its Family Unit in October 2017 with the aim to:

- Enhance the understanding and importance of gender equality to men;
- Ensure the effective participation and involvement of men in family wellbeing, meet specific male sensitive needs and concerns, especially with regard to their sexual and reproductive health;
- Promote equal opportunities to men and women in the development process;
- Ensure that men become caring partners through the implementation of 'Male Responsibility and Family Well-Being'.

33. The NWC organizes awareness session on gender concept for members of women's associations and other women/girls, including students. The aim is to empower women to speak out on gender stereotypes experienced in Mauritius and to contribute towards finding ways to break these stereotypes. Programmes on breaking stereotypes would then be implemented accordingly. Short courses on male dominated field of work such as 'Do It Yourself' are to be offered. The NWC has been able to target 1,445 women through sessions on 'promoting gender equality and breaking gender stereotypes' from February to March 2018. These activities range from interactive sessions, talks, and cine-clubs, among others. New activities being organised to break gender stereotypes include (1) short courses on understanding the rights of women and girls (online course through the US Embassy), (2) women's rights as human rights (in collaboration with the Human Rights Commission) and (3) sports activities for women in male dominated areas such as football and basketball.

34. Although authorities are aware of the fact that women still face many forms of discrimination, Mauritius does not distinguish its population though minority or majority ethnic groups. As per the Constitution of Mauritius, non-discrimination based on ethnicity and sex is guaranteed.

35. Migrant women who are mostly women working in the manufacturing sector enjoy the same rights as their Mauritian counterparts. The MGECDFW, in close collaboration with the Mauritius Manufacturing Sector Labour Welfare Fund under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations and the Trade Unions ensure that their rights are upheld.

36. Mauritius is yet to come up with policy measures pertaining specifically to the rights Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender (LGBT) and intersex women. However, under the Equal Opportunities Act, an act of discrimination means a less favourable treatment suffered by any individual on the basis of his/her age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex and sexual orientation.

Gender-based violence against women

37. In order to combat impunity for domestic violence offences by eliminating obstacles currently preventing victims from reporting incidents to the police, prosecuting and adequately punishing perpetrators and providing reparation to women who are victims of domestic violence, as well as to ensure the effective investigation and ex officio prosecution of cases of domestic violence, the following actions have been taken:

- Training of police officers to better deal with cases of domestic violence is an on-going feature. So far, 633 police officers have been trained;
- A colloquium on 'Domestic Violence: the Justice System' was conducted in November 2016 to reach out to lawyers, in the context of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This event was attended by 85 people;
- A workshop on Strengthening Judicial Response to Domestic Violence was held in May 2017 for 50 magistrates and 50 prosecutors;
- As a workplace initiative to sensitise employers and employees, the Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy is an on-going feature and in 2017, 141 employees were targeted.

38. The Mauritius Police Force has taken several measures to improve police response in cases of domestic violence. These include:

- A full module on domestic violence has been developed by the Police Training School (PTS) with the concurrence of the Police Family Protection Unit (PFPU) and the MGECDFW;
- Clear instructions have been given to all police officers on the protocol of actions to be adopted and observed at Police Stations and the PFPU in domestic violence cases by way of circulars issued by the Commissioner of Police;
- Training of Front Line Officers, PFPU Officers and Station Managers have been carried out in batches successively since 2016. Such training is scheduled yearly at the PTS;
- The training module on domestic violence covers a number of topics including the new legislations, international conventions, effects and consequences of

domestic violence, signs and symptoms, customer care, gathering of evidence, trauma and victim's behaviours, analysing of victim and abuser relationship and improving police response among others;

- A trained police officer on domestic violence is placed on duty at all Police Stations to record the declaration of victims and to initiate prompt action before the victim is referred to the PFPU for further actions namely for application for Protection Order, Tenancy or Occupation Order;
- The PFPU has gone a step forward with the Reconstruction and Recovery Programme which includes calling back victims who had attended the mediation process and follow up for application in respect of Protection Order which is carried out on a period of three months basis to ensure continuous safety of victims, improvement in their relationship with their spouse and to identify any of their needs on a case to case basis;
- The PFPU also ensures follow up action of all reported cases and ascertains that no further acts of violence in all its forms are being exerted towards victims of domestic violence issued with a Protection Order;
- Besides the seven existing PFPU in all Divisions, five additional PFPUs have been set up in areas where domestic violence cases are more prevalent;
- Awareness and sensitization campaigns are carried out on a permanent basis at all levels.

39. In order to raise awareness among women and girls about the criminal nature of all forms of gender-based violence and the harmful effects of such violence on their health and to encourage them to report acts of gender-based violence committed against them, 36 awareness raising campaigns were conducted whereby 1,024 people were reached during the year 2017.

40. The Commission for Women of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues have set up a Steering Committee to fight Gender Based Violence (GBV) in 2017. The Steering Committee is chaired by the Commissioner for Women with the aim to work towards the elimination of GBV in Rodrigues. The frequency of meeting of the committee is every 2 months and its objectives of the committee are to:

- Harmonise the effort of all stakeholders working in this field;
- Work for the gradual decrease of the prevalence of GBV;
- Ensure that victims are getting the best services in the different institutions;
- Ensure that perpetrators are undergoing rehabilitation program in order to prevent relapse;
- Set up "Une Maison d'Urgence et de Relais" for victims who have no place to live after an act of violence has been perpetuated on them.

41. A pilot project launched in Rodrigues on Family Day (15 May 2018) aims to ensure that the children of victims are obtaining appropriate services and to empower victims so they are less at risk.

42. Officers from the MGECDFW proceed to Agalega at request from Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands to raise awareness and address issues of domestic violence and child abuse.

43. The Protection from Domestic Violence Act which was enacted in 1997 and amended in 2004, 2007, 2011 and 2016 affords protection to the spouse of, as well as other persons living under the same roof as, a violent person. The 2016 amendment

provides for better protection of victims of domestic violence by increasing the powers of enforcement officers and widening the definition of the term "domestic violence". The Act provides for the issue of Protection Orders, Occupation Orders and Tenancy Orders by a Magistrate and affords protection against physical, emotional, sexual violence and even threatened violence.

44. Failure to comply with any Court Orders (Protection Order, Occupation Order or Tenancy Order) is an offence and upon conviction one is liable to:

- 1st conviction: Fine not exceeding Rs 50,000 and imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year;
- 2nd conviction: Fine not exceeding Rs 100,000 and imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years;
- 3rd or subsequent conviction: Imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years.

45. A National Coalition Against Domestic Violence Committee was set up under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office in 2015 inter alia to:

- Ensure that an appropriate framework is put in place for the protection of Victims of domestic violence so that they get proper accommodation under the care of institutions and have sufficient means to lead normal lives;
- Put in place a fast track system with all stakeholders for assistance and support to victims of domestic violence;
- Keep updated statistics on cases of domestic violence and to ensure that appropriate follow up is taken in respect of each case.

46. In line with the recommendations of the committee, actions were initiated towards the provision of emergency accommodation to women victims of domestic violence and the provision of capitation grant to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which cater for victims of domestic violence.

47. There are 3 shelters, SOS Femmes, Passerelle Women Centre and Chrysalide (NGOs), which aim at providing temporary accommodation to women who are victims of domestic violence as well as to their children. The shelters strive to provide these women a place of safety where they will be encouraged to break the cycle of violence and provided with immediate assistance. The shelters are open 7 days a week and operate on a 24-hour basis. Since May 2017, a daily capitation grant of Rs 400 and Rs 341 respectively is given to NGOs accommodating women victims of domestic violence and their child/children, except for SOS Femmes which is already benefitting from an annual grant of Rs 1.05 million from the MGECDFW to accommodate victims of domestic violence. Gender links has a 'Halfway Home' for young adults coming out from the Rehabilitation Youth Centre, Correctional Youth Centre and children shelters. This caters for young people who have lost track of their parents or became orphan upon release and those who were abandoned by their parents, who are often homeless when they come out at the age of 18. Through the Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress, the MGECDFW has encouraged NGOs to formulate and submit concrete proposals for the provision of additional shelters to cater for victims of domestic violence. This programme is however being phased out gradually.

48. The MGECDFW has initiated a Domestic Violence Information System (DOVIS) which is a computerised system for data collection. Statistics on cases of domestic violence for the year 2017:

- Number of cases reported at Family Support Bureaux = 3436;

- Number of cases of domestic violence reported at Family Support Bureaux = 1703;
- Number of applications of Protection Orders = 619 (spouse — 478; other than spouse — 138);
- Number of Protection Orders issued = 361 (spouse — 283; other than spouse — 78).

49. The tables below provide data on the number of prosecutions for sexual and domestic violence.

Number of persons prosecuted for sexual and domestic violence — 2011–2017

Year	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
Sexual offences	272	282	341	259	364	451	433
Domestic violence	366	354	443	377	448	588	623

Source: The Master and Registrar, Supreme Court.

Number of sentences imposed on sexual offences — 2011–2017

Year	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
Imprisonment	60	68	73	51	51	77	68
Fine	35	42	52	19	32	50	37
Probation	5	1	4	4	7	2	1
Community service order	15	12	28	20	20	39	31
Conditional discharge and absolute discharge	40	67	63	47	54	44	49
Total convicted	**155**	**190**	**220**	**141**	**164**	**212**	**186**

Source: The Master and Registrar, Supreme Court.

Number of sentences imposed on domestic violence offences — 2011–2017

Year	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
Imprisonment	48	30	44	44	39	56	100
Fine	244	220	302	250	291	429	418
Probation	2	1	2	4	1	6	8
Community service order	2	3	1	3	4	9	3
Conditional discharge and absolute discharge	9	13	6	15	20	15	17
Total convicted	**305**	**267**	**355**	**316**	**355**	**515**	**546**

Source: The Master and Registrar, Supreme Court.

50. Corporal punishment is prohibited in all schools, from pre-primary to secondary by virtue of regulation 13(4) of the Education Regulations as well as under section 13(1) of the Child Protection Act. The Child Protection Act makes it an offence to "ill-treat a child or otherwise expose a child to harm". Under the Act, "harm" includes physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or moral injury, neglect, ill-treatment, impairment of health or development. Prosecution for the offence of 'assault' is

covered under section 230(1) of the Criminal Code. Prohibition of corporal punishment in all settings is being considered in the draft Children's Bill.

51. With regard to the issue of marital rape, the matter is still under consideration, namely as to whether to criminalise specifically the offence of marital rape. It is nonetheless possible to prosecute for the offence of marital rape under section 249 of the Criminal Code as it stands. Moreover, under section 13(2) of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, domestic violence includes compelling the spouse by force or threat to engage in any conduct or act, sexual or otherwise, from which the spouse has the right to abstain. Sodomy is an offence under section 250(1) of the Criminal Code.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

52. Prostitution is strictly prohibited in Mauritius and sex tourism is illegal in the country. The Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act gives effect to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, namely to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and protect and assist victims of trafficking. The Act provides that any person who trafficks another person or allows another person to be trafficked shall commit an offence and it shall not be a defence for that person so charged that, inter alia, the victim has consented to the act which was intended to constitute trafficking. Any person who knowingly leases a room, house, building or establishment or subleases or allows it to be used, for the purpose of harbouring a victim of trafficking; or advertises, publishes, prints, broadcasts, distributes, or causes the advertisement, publication, broadcast or distribution of, information which suggests or alludes to trafficking by any means, including the use of the internet or other information technology, shall also commit an offence under the Act. The Act also provides, inter alia, for the repatriation of victims of trafficking as well as the return of victims of trafficking to Mauritius. Appropriate compensation can also be ordered by the Court to be paid to the victim(s) by the person convicted under section 11 for (a) damage to, or loss of destruction of, property, including money; (b) physical, psychological or other injury; or (c) loss of income or support, resulting from the commission of the offence. Moreover, the Act imposes a duty on any person to report any case of trafficking to the police if the person believes that another person is a victim of trafficking. The identity of the person shall not be disclosed unless a Judge in Chambers otherwise orders. Furthermore, the law provides for the setting up of centres for victims of human trafficking. Such centres are to provide temporary accommodation suited for the needs of victims of trafficking admitted to them. All cases are inquired into by the Central Criminal Investigation Department and the regular police inquire into cases of trafficking in persons, whereas the Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs investigates cases of trafficking of children.

53. An Inter-Ministerial Committee on Trafficking In Persons (TIP) was set up in December 2015 to look into the issue of TIP in Mauritius. Stakeholders were invited to forward their views and suggestions on the matter to the Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General's office prepared a working draft on the Proposed National Plan of Action for Combating TIP, which was circulated at the second Inter-Ministerial Committee held on 14th March 2016. The Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues has been mandated to look into the issue of TIP. A subcommittee chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues was set up and consultations are being held with relevant stakeholders to finalise same.

54. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) has participated in the various Inter-Ministerial Committees that took place as from December 2015, following which, the ODPP has taken the following actions:

- In January 2016, the ODPP, in collaboration with the US Embassy and the International Organisation for Migration, provided a training course to various stakeholders on investigation and prosecution of TIP offences;
- A second training was provided to senior officials of the police department by two prosecutors of the ODPP on 23rd January 2016;
- In December 2016, the ODPP had a working session with representatives of the police. There were about ten cases under investigation for breach of the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009.

Trafficking in persons recorded from 2009 to 2017 — Island of Mauritius

	2009	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
Cases of trafficking in persons established under the Combating of Trafficking Persons Act 2009	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	2 (illegal stay)
Cases of trafficking in persons under the Child Protection Act	3	5	4	3	3	5	5	4	2
Cases having bearing on human trafficking	3		8	7	6	4	9	8	3

Source: Mauritius Police Force.

Trafficking in persons convicted from 2009 to 2017 — Island of Mauritius

	2009	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
Cases of trafficking in persons established under the Combating of Trafficking Persons Act 2009	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Cases of trafficking in persons under the Child Protection Act	1	1		1					1
Cases having bearing on human trafficking	8	3	7	7	4	7	1		3

Source: Mauritius Police Force.

55. The Mauritius Police Force (MPF) has also introduced a number of measures to prevent TIP. These include:

- The PFPU has a scanning mechanism in place to detect cases of trafficking. This is done during interviewing of victims of domestic violence, especially foreign nationals. Suspected perpetrators are summoned and interviewed to ensure that they are not involved in TIP or linked to prostitution networks;
- Persons calling at PFPU throughout the island are duly sensitized on the problem of TIP;

- Law enforcement officials have been attending seminars and capacity building sessions organized by the US Embassy and conducted by Australian experts on 27th and 28th November 2017 at the Women's Centre in Phoenix;
- The Police Training School (PTS) incorporates a module on TIP for newly trainee police officers. Other police officers have also undergone such training at the PTS;
- A specialised section has been set up at the level of the Central CID to handle cases of human trafficking;
- The Passport and Immigration Office is working with the Ministry of Labour on joint operations to verify any case of retention of passport;
- The nexus of trafficking of foreign workers from Bangladesh, India and Nepal is under close watch whereas the nexus of trafficking of workers from Nepal and India has been dismantled and Interpol has been informed;
- Cases of TIP are under prosecution before the Courts and an accused party has been convicted before the Intermediate Court;
- A Steering Committee has been set up at the level of the police and regular meetings are held involving concerned units — Central CID, PFPU, Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs, Crime Prevention Unit, Police Prosecution Office, PTS and Crime Records Office;
- Working sessions have been held with officials from the US Embassy, the Police and Ministry of Defence to assess measures to be undertaken to upgrade Mauritius from Tier Two to Tier One;
- The Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs and Crime Prevention Unit works towards controlling truancy of school children as well as monitoring the activities undertaken by these children;
- Sensitization campaigns are being carried out in schools, colleges, universities and at the work place of migrant workers to inform them of their rights. A poster campaign has also been launched throughout the island;
- The Police is involved with other Government institutions and NGOs to help school dropouts and women involved in prostitution to undergo training to acquire skills for the job market in order to facilitate their integration into society.

56. The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice (AHRIM) and the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, produced a brochure highlighting the responsibilities of tourism industry stakeholders in the "fight for zero tolerance to sexual exploitation of children in 2010. The brochure is currently being reviewed and updated for circulation to all operators. Tourist establishments are licensed and controlled by the Tourism Authority and any tourist accommodation found to be involved in immoral activities, such as prostitutions or child trafficking, is severely sanctioned. Moreover, during police security campaigns, pamphlets were distributed to the public and at the airport.

57. The MGECDFW is mandated to cater for the needs of children who are victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation. Concerning the offence of child trafficking, section 13A of the Child Protection Act provides for:

- "Any person who wilfully and unlawfully recruits, transport, transfers, harbours or receives a child for the purpose of exploitation shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to penal servitude for a term not exceeding 30 years";

- Any person who wilfully and unlawfully recruits, transports, transfers, harbours or receives a child:

  (a) Outside Mauritius for the purpose of exploitation in Mauritius;

  (b) In Mauritius for the purpose of exploitation outside Mauritius.

  Shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to penal servitude for a term not exceeding 30 years."

58. A Residential Drop-in Centre was made operational since May 2016, to cater for the rehabilitative needs of children victims of sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation including child trafficking. The setting up of the Drop-in Centre is in line with the recommendations made by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in January 2016 with a view to strengthening policies and programmes for the prevention, recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration of children victims of CSEC. The Residential Drop-in Centre which is managed by the National Children's Council can accommodate some 32 children, aged between 0 to 18 years, with separate dormitories between different age groups. The residential centre facilities ensure sustainability in the recovery and rehabilitation of victims of sexual abuse and exploitation and provide efficient services to the victims such as specialized support services, such as psychotherapy and the reconstruction stage. Children are sent back to school to resume their studies or training courses with a view to empowering them for their gradual re-insertion in mainstream society.

59. The issue of CSEC is also addressed by the Drop-in-Centre which is managed by the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association. During the period January 2011 to March 2018, 2960 cases were registered at the Drop-In Centre, out of which 23 were alleged cases of child prostitution. The services provided by the Drop-in Centre for all CSEC victims include: — individual counselling, group counselling, couple and parental counselling, psychosexual counselling and contraceptive counselling, telephone counselling, monthly medical sessions, rehabilitative activities including art and craft sessions and activities for victims, home visits to clients and, prevention through talks in the community including schools.

60. Moreover, measures are taken to facilitate the tracking of child trafficking/child prostitution cases with the support of Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs, as well as providing for psycho-social support and alternative skilling to victims of trafficking. From January 2017 to June 2017, 1,090 persons sensitized on CSEC issues in schools and in Social Welfare Centres and Community Centres by officers of the CDU and psychologist of the Drop-in-Centre; and between January and November 2017, one case of child trafficking (a girl) was registered at the CDU. 49 officers from the police force, MGECDFW, Ministry of Labour, NHRC and Ombudsperson for Children's office were trained on combating trafficking in November 2017. The training was organised by IREX, US Embassy in collaboration with the Police Department. Further measures adopted to combat CSEC include:

- Reviewing existing legislation to ensure that better protection is given to children victims of CSEC inclusive of child prostitution;
- Revisiting the institutional set up available for the provision of a continuum of care to victims of CSEC inclusive of child prostitution;
- Operationalizing a full-fledged residential rare for CSEC victims at Grand River North West as from 26 May 2016;
- Maintaining and enhancing support provided by the day care drop-in- centre for CSEC victims managed by the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association (MFPWA);

- Capacity building of all those working with children alleged victims or prone to child prostitution ranging from government officials, civil society/NGO representatives, parents through 'Atelier Partage-Parents' and counselling sessions and children themselves through school child protection clubs and children's clubs;
- Providing a full spectrum of thorough care and support inclusive of bio-medico, psycho-socio, economic, legal to ensure lessening and removal of trauma as well as development of resilience in children, victims of child prostitution;
- Conducting sensitization campaigns on the ill effects of child violence, inclusive of child prostitution, to children in schools, children's clubs and school child protection clubs;
- Conducting multimedia campaigns on the ill effects of child prostitution on a very regular basis;
- Ensuring the development of safe neighbourhoods through the setting up of Community Child Watch Committees in high-risk areas;
- Providing mentors to children who are prone to child prostitution because of their mild behavioural problems and inability of parents for adequate control.

Participation in political and public life

61. The Government of Mauritius is conscious of the need for an increased participation of women in the democratic process of the country. In line with international and regional commitments on human rights, Government enacted a new Local Government Act, in 2011, which states that 'any group representing more than two candidates in an electoral ward shall ensure that the candidates are not all of the same sex'. In addition, the reserve list of candidates presented by parties or groups to the Electoral Supervisory Commission to be used for the filling of vacancies shall not comprise more than two thirds of persons of the same sex. The list should also indicate the order of precedence of each of the candidates, provided that not more than two consecutive candidates on the list shall be of the same sex. Amendments were also made to the Constitution to provide for a minimum number of candidates standing for election for local authorities to be of a particular sex, with a view to ensuring adequate representation of each sex. This legislation is a major milestone as it led to a significant leap in the number of women elected at the local elections, i.e. from 12.7 per cent in 2005 to 36.7 per cent and 34.2 per cent in 2012 and 2015 respectively at the Municipal Council level whilst the figures increased from 5.7 per cent in 2005 to 25.4 per cent in 2012 at the Village Council elections. Given the difficulties faced by women Municipal and Village Councillors in fulfilling their roles effectively and in applying a gender perspective within the local authorities, the MGECDFW in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands conducted a tailored-made programme for the women Councillors in 2016.

62. Following the General Elections of December 2014, Government nominated a woman as President of the Republic for the first time in the history of the country. The current Speaker of the National Assembly is also a woman. Out of the 70 Members of the National Assembly, eight (8) are women (i.e. 11.4 per cent) from which three (3) are Ministers. A woman from the Opposition has been assigned the responsibilities of Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee in March 2017. In December 2017, following a reshuffling of the Cabinet of Ministers, a woman Minister has been nominated as Vice Prime Minister and is also the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands.

63. Ensuring a fairer representation of women in Parliament remains a major challenge because of the current electoral system i.e. First Past the Post system. In order to remedy to this situation, consensus is to be reached to be able bring forth an electoral reform, inclusive of the quota system that would respond to the complex multi-ethnic composition of the Mauritian society as well as enabling women to be fully part and parcel of the democratic process.

64. A Parliamentary Gender Caucus (PGC) was launched by Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee, G.C.S.K, Speaker of the National Assembly of Mauritius in March 2017.The PGC is a permanent structure established at Parliamentary level to provide a platform for members of all political persuasions to deliberate on, and advocate for gender equality. The PGC has commissioned two studies — (1) the sociological profiling of perpetrators of domestic violence in Mauritius and (2) the gender audit in the civil service in Mauritius. The findings of these two studies were presented in April 2018.

65. Noticeable progress has been observed in the representation of women holding senior positions in the public service. There are many women holding senior positions in the public service including -judges, magistrates, law officers, doctors, permanent secretaries etc. Government appointed a woman as Deputy Commissioner of Prison in 2014.A woman is also holding the post of Ombudsperson for Children.

Women in senior positions in the public service at November 2017

Position	%
Senior Chief Executive	50
Permanent Secretaries	38.9
Deputy Permanent Secretaries	48.1
Assistant Permanent Secretaries	60.7
Judges	50
Magistrates	70

66. Although there is no policy for a gender quota in the recruitment exercise in the diplomatic service, there has nonetheless been a significant increase in the number of women recruited in the service in recent years as indicated in the table below.

Intake	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	%
2008/2009	8	4	12	33.3
2013	4	4	8	50
2016/2017	7	9	16	56.25

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Regional Integration and International Trade

67. Government has a policy of granting leaves to spouses of diplomats and non-diplomats who work in the public sector and who wish to accompany their husbands and wives while they are posted in overseas Missions for the entire duration of the posting. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has taken additional measures in recent years to have husbands and wives who are both diplomats to be posted together in Missions so as not to disrupt their family. Moreover, a female career ambassador is occupying the post of Secretary for Foreign Affairs, since 2014. Ms. Pramila Patten of Mauritius assumed office as the United

Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict at the level of Under Secretary-General on 12 June 2017. Mauritius also currently has a sitting Judge who is a CEDAW committee member.

68. The Gender Unit of the MGECDFW has sustained its policies by conducting tailored-made programmes to enable women to stand as potential candidates as well as to play a more prominent role in decision-making instances. To that effect, the MGECDFW with the assistance of the United States Embassy organised a 'Training of Trainers Programme for the Political Empowerment of Women in 2012'. 20 representatives of different political parties as well as 5 officers of the MGECDFW benefitted from this training. Subsequently, awareness sessions were conducted, wherein 200 women were sensitised on the importance of having more women in the political arena. Modules covered included, inter alia, the need for more women in politics and barriers impeding on their participation; effective public speaking; campaign planning and development of campaign materials; legal provisions in Mauritius regarding candidates and elections; leadership; governance; accountability and transparency; and media relations. Awareness-raising campaigns aimed at empowering women on the need for their enhanced participation in decision-making were consolidated and conducted in different regions and in women's centres from 2013 to 2015.

69. The Commission for Women of the Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly launched the Women Leaders Programme in 2017. This programme aims to enable women in walks of life to «Franchir une Nouvelle Etape». Different training and coaching programmes are being developed for the following groups — women in politics/NGOs, women as public officers, women entrepreneurs and women at home. The aim is to target 1500 women for the period 2017–2022. Different local, national and regional partners are involved in the program.

70. In order to address the deficit of women holding senior positions in the private sector which represents only 7 per cent in the capacity of Chief Executive, Government launched a new "Code of Corporate Governance" in 2017, which includes under *Principle 3: Director Appointment Procedures that the search for Board candidates should be conducted, and appointments made, on merit, against objective criteria (to include skills, knowledge, experience and independence and with due regard for the benefits of diversity on the Board, including the gender aspect.* This initiative aims to ensure that there is a more equitable gender representation on the Board of Directors. Moreover, the Mauritius Institute of Directors held a roundtable discussion in 2017 entitled *"Initiative for Gender Diversity in Leadership"* whereby ambassadors of the world major economies as well as representatives across the public and private sectors gathered together to discuss the possible causes behind the lack of gender diversity in the boardrooms and identified options for sustainable solutions. However, family responsibilities and caring roles of women still hinder them from climbing the ladder in the private sector. The cooperation of the private sector in adopting gender-sensitive policies at all levels of their institutions is instrumental to enable women to move up the ladder. Improved gender sensitive mechanisms for data collection, analysis and dissemination are to be encouraged through advocacy and policy decisions.

71. With regard to the issue of having access to parental leave and leave for family reasons as to the recommendations of the concluding remarks at Paragraph 27e, it is to be highlighted that the conditions of service for all women working in the public sector, irrespective of their positions within the hierarchy are governed by the Pay Research Bureau (PRB) Report, including sick leave, maternity leave and adoption leave.

Education

72. In Mauritius, every child has the right to education. The Education Act provides for compulsory basic education up to the age of 16. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (MEHRTESR) oversees the education sector in Mauritius. It provides various opportunities and facilities to girls and boys to enable them to further their education. These include:

- Scholarships for girls;
- Policy on universal access to education:
  - Free compulsory education for all up to the age of 16;
  - Free transport to all primary and secondary school children;
  - Free textbooks to all primary school children;
  - Social security grants to students from poor families;
  - A Student tracking system as reinforcement for compulsory attendance up to the age of 16;
  - Provision of grants and scholarships to both boys and girls as well as special provision made for scholarships for children of vulnerable families for higher studies;
  - A per capita grant to all enrolled pre-school children;
  - Setting up of 30 Zone d'Education Prioritaire (ZEP) schools in Mauritius and the outer islands.
- Gender sensitive learning environment, curriculum and learning materials:
  - Boys and girls have access to the same curricula, exams, qualified teaching staff and same equipment and facilities in both primary and secondary schools;
  - The National Curriculum Framework has been reviewed to remove gender-sensitive stereotypes;
  - All data are kept disaggregated by sex and exam results are analysed with a gender perspective;
  - Greater curricular relevance with the introduction of new subjects such as Entrepreneurship Education, Travel and Tourism, etc.;
  - Availability of all subjects to all students;
  - Exam fees are paid by Government at SC/'O' Level and HSC/'A' Level for all students;
  - Cash rewards to students from low-income families on completion of different grades — Grade 9, SC & HSC;
  - National Education Counselling Service.
- Child marriage is prohibited in Mauritius as the Code Civil Mauricien provides that a person in Mauritius may get married at the age of 18. However, a female aged 16 but under the age of 18 can get married with the consent of her parents or with the consent of one of the parents exercising 'l'autorité parentale' or in the absence of the consent of parents through the Judge in Chambers if the latter considers that it would be in the interests of the minor to get married. The

provision of free compulsory education for all up to the age of 16 is also a deterrent to child marriage;

- Implementation of the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

73. There is no gender bias for admission of pupils in Grade 1. The table below indicates that the progression of girls at primary level is relatively high.

Year	*Girls' progression at Primary level (Transition Rate)*
2010	84.1
2011	86.5
2012	87.0
2013	92.2
2014	97.0
2015	97.0
2016	99.3
2017	N.A

Source: MEHRTESR.

74. Statistics on absenteeism at primary and secondary levels do not reveal any significant differences between levels of absenteeism among boys and girls.

Absenteeism in primary schools 2015–2017 (Jan–Sep)

Year	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*
2015	13.21	13.06	**13.10**
2016	13.38	13.06	**13.22**
2017	13.40	13.03	**13.22**

Absenteeism in secondary schools 2015–2017 (Jan–Sep)

Year	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*
2015	24.34	21.11	**22.25**
2016	22.18	18.83	**20.39**
2017	18.52	17.05	**17.73**

Source: MEHRTESR.

75. The few students who fall pregnant are allowed to attend classes. However, most of the time they stop coming to school at around the sixth month of pregnancy. These students are nonetheless encouraged to return to school after delivery. Special arrangements are made for those who have to sit for end of year exams such as School Certificate and Higher School Certificate.

76. The Strategic Plan 2008–2020 of the MEHRTESR has among its goals to:

- Increase access and improve equity in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET);
- Improve articulation between TVET and mainstream education;
- Enhance quality and relevance of TVET to cater for both sexes.

77. The target is to increase total female enrolment to 40 per cent in 2020.

Education, Training, Science and Technology Gender indicators

Indicator	*Total*	*Female (%)*	*Male (%)*	*Measures to improve the situation good practices*
Female and male enrolment in science and technology training (combined enrolment, full-time, apprenticeship and part-time mode courses for year 2016 at the MITD)	7 290	21.1	78.9	TVET is equally accessible to both male and female participants. The TVET sector is being reformed to encourage young Mauritians chose the TVET pathway for the career development after completion of basic education Free travel by bus facilities provided to TVET learners TVET courses are offered free of charge up to the National Certificate level 3 and course fees for higher level courses are highly subsidised. Education/TVET is compulsory for children up to age of 16 MITD is providing training for a 'women back-to-work' programme

Source: MEHRTESR.

78. TVET learners are eligible to apply for special scholarships specially devised for them, and offered by different institutions such as SBM Group, Mutual Aid and the Rotary Club to encourage them to pursue training at the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD). Moreover, the MITD trainees can also apply for scholarships under the Scheme meant for vulnerable groups offered by the MEHRTESR and the National Solidarity Fund.

79. The Government of Mauritius funds an equal number of scholarships for boys and girls in different disciplines (appendix). The MEHRTESR also advertises and processes scholarships, fully or partly funded, by donor countries as and when same are received at the Scholarships Section.

80. All education policies give equal opportunities and access to education to boys and girls at all levels and our education system caters for gender-neutral services. With a view to retaining students, both boys and girls, in schools the following measures have been adopted:

- Free and compulsory education for all up to the age of 16;
- Free transport to all school children;
- Free textbooks to all primary school children;
- Social security grants to students from poor families;
- Increase in the meal allowance for students attending ZEP schools by 50 per cent (from Rs 40 to Rs 60 per day);
- Examination fees paid by Government at SC/'O' Level and HSC/'A' Level for all students;
- Encouraging students from poor families under the official Register of Mauritius to achieve higher education levels through cash award given as follows:

- Rs 15,000 for successfully completing Grade 9 under the Nine-Year Schooling;
- Rs 25,000 for successfully completing the School Certificate level or equivalent vocational certificate;
- Rs 35,000 for those successfully completing the Higher School Certificate or equivalent technical qualification.

- Provision of grants and scholarships to both boys and girls;
- Introduction of a Student Loan Scheme for both sexes for full time/part time students at undergraduate level with Government acting as guarantor;
- Greater curricular relevance with the introduction of new subjects — Entrepreneurship Education, Travel & Tourism and the like while the HSC Professional (an alternative to HSC/'A' Level) was introduced in 2015 for all students;
- Broadening access to i VET courses for greater participation of all young people and stronger awareness of the practical realities of the world of work for future employability;
- Introduction of new and higher-level courses to encourage female participation namely Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing, Arts and Crafts, Jewellery, Business Management and Hotel Trades;
- A Student Tracking System as reinforcement for compulsory attendance up to age of 16 has been put in place;
- The National Education Counselling Service (NECS) works in close collaboration with Heads of Schools, teachers and parents and acts as a support service. Educational psychologists provide psychological assistance and support and promote the general welfare and wellbeing of children and families for proper care and upbringing.

81. The National Curriculum Framework for Grades 7 to Grade 9 has been reviewed in the context of the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education reform. Elements on sexual and reproductive health and rights have been included at all levels of education. Additionally, one educator per secondary school is following training on social and emotional wellbeing which is dispensed by Service Diocesain de L'Education Catholique trainers who are specialised in this field. The themes covered include information on combatting gender stereotyping and sexual behaviour. Elements on sexual and reproductive health and rights have also been included in the biology syllabus at secondary level. A component of Life Skills has been introduced as from Grade 7 which covers issues of gender stereotyping. Moreover, all educators working on this component have received training dispensed by the Mauritius Institute of Education. Human rights education will be integrated in the Life skills for Grade 8.

82. So far, men outnumber women academic staff in publicly funded higher education institutions, as indicated in the table below. This gap is not highly significant and is expected to narrow eventually.

Full time academic staff by gender in publicly funded institutions (2015)

Organisation	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
University of Mauritius	165	141	306
Mauritius Institute of Education	57	45	102
Mahatma Gandhi Institute	32	40	72
University of Technology, Mauritius	20	13	33
Université des Mascareignes	40	13	53
Open University of Mauritius	8	8	16
Rabindranath Tagore Institute	1	1	2
Fashion and Design Institute	4	3	7
Mauritius Institute of Training and Development	19	21	40
Mauritius Institute of Health	4	4	8
Total academic	**350**	**289**	**639**

Source: MEHRTESR.

Employment

83. Provisions already exist in section 30 of the Employment Rights Act (ERiA) whereby female workers upon their confinement, and irrespective of their length of service, are granted 14 weeks maternity leave.

84. The National Remuneration Board (NRB) is responsible for making recommendations on minimum remuneration and other terms and conditions of employment for workers in the private sector. While reviewing Remuneration Regulations, it remains guided by the principles outlined at section 97 of the Employment Relations Act (ERiA) and in so far as is consistent with the contextual evolution of the sectors of activity, ensures that wage determination, job appellations and classifications are based on the principle of "equal remuneration for work of equal value"; in line with Convention No. 100. Wages of workers employed in different sectors of economic activities and presently covered under specific Remuneration Regulations have generally been determined with regard to non-discriminatory factors/criteria including among others, nature of work to be performed, degree of skill required, capacity and qualification.

85. Differential rates in Remuneration Regulations applicable in agricultural sectors, in particular the sugar and tea industries, are based on the inherent requirements of the jobs and as such should not be viewed as being discriminatory. They actually correspond to differences in the work performed in terms of tasks allocated, which are generally much lower for female workers as compared to male workers. Such differences in the work performed are further reinforced by statutory limitations on the assignment of tasks to women.

86. During the period 1st January 2017 to 31st December 2017, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Training (MLIRT) registered 6 complaints of sexual harassment at the regional labour offices, out of which two complaints were set aside; two others were withdrawn by the workers concerned and one was resolved to the satisfaction of parties. The remaining one is still being enquired into.

87. Data on the number of migrant workers and their fields of occupation and the number of complaints filed against abusive employers and outcome of these investigations are illustrated in the tables below.

Complaints received enforcement 2015–2017

Year	*2017*
No. of complaints registered	16 058
Cases disposed	16 614
of which cases referred to Court	1 179
Amount paid	**88 303 037**

Inspections carried enforcement out 2015–2017

Year	*2017*
No. of Inspections	5 770
Sum recovered during inspection/enquiries	191 266.3

Enquiries carried out Enforcement 2017

Year	*2017*
No. of enquiries	791

Court cases lodged 2015–2017

Year	*2017*
Open Court	758
Amount recovered from Open Court	64 966 749
Chambers	289
Amount recovered from Chambers	1 846 035
Criminal	100
Fine paid	208 600
Costs	11 600

Source: MLIRT.

Complaints received migrant workers 2015–2017

Year	*2017*
No. of Complaints Registered	603
Cases disposed	560
of which cases referred to Court	8
Amount paid (Rs)	12 094 225

Inspections carried out migrant workers 2015–2017

Year	*2017*
No. of Inspections	1 119
Sum recovered during inspection/enquiries (Rs)	3 511 658

Enquiries carried out migrant workers 2017

Year	*2017*
No. of enquiries	66

Source: MLIRT.

88. The ERiA provides necessary safeguards and protection regarding labour rights, indistinctively and indiscriminately to all workers (both male and female) including migrant workers. To that effect and with a view to combating, prohibiting or else curbing all forms of discriminatory practices as well as preventing any form of labour exploitation at the workplace and to ensure the application of the principle of equality between men and women, including migrant workers with regards to equal opportunities and access to the labour market, section 4 of the ERiA on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation provides inter alia that:

- No worker shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by his employer in his employment or occupation;
- No person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by a prospective employer in respect of access to employment or occupation.

89. Under the Act, "discrimination" includes affording different treatment to different workers attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by age, race, colour, caste, creed, sex, sexual orientation, HIV status, religion, political opinion, place of origin, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.

90. Section 20(1) of the ERiA on equal remuneration for work of equal value provides, inter alia, that both men and women, including migrant workers, should be treated equally at the workplace with regards to the payment of remuneration:

- Every employer shall ensure that the remuneration of any worker shall not be less favourable than that of another worker performing work of equal value;
- Where an employer has recourse to the services of a job contractor, the job contractor shall ensure that the remuneration of any worker shall not be less favourable than that of another worker performing work of equal value.

91. In order to further deter, curb or otherwise prohibit unfair decision on grounds of discriminatory practices, section 67(1)(e)(iii) of the ERiA provides that non-compliance with the above section constitutes an offence, for which the Court may impose a fine not exceeding 25,000 rupees and a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years to the convicted party.

92. The legislation, other than specific provisions laid down under maternity protection for female workers, is gender-neutral be it for local or migrant workers or else male or female workers. This is reflected in the other sections of the legislation as follows.

93. Section 54 of the ERiA on violence at work provides further protection to workers against different forms of violence at the workplace, including sexual harassment, which is another form of discrimination and which affects women in particular. Section 54 of the ERiA provides, inter alia, that "no person shall harass, sexually or otherwise, assault, verbally abuse, swear at or insult a worker in the course of or as a result of his work". According to the ERiA, "harassment" refers to any unwanted conduct, verbal, non-verbal, visual, psychological or physical, based on age, disability, HIV status, domestic circumstances, sex, sexual orientation, race,

colour, language, religion, political, trade union or other opinion or belief, national or social origin, association with a minority, birth or other status, that a reasonable person would have foreseen that a worker would be affected negatively in his dignity As a forceful deterrent to eliminate such kind of unwanted conduct at the workplace, the ERiA provides that any person found guilty would on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding 75,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years.

94. Section 36(3) of the ERiA specifically provides that where a worker is ill-treated by an employer, the worker may claim that the agreement has been unjustifiably terminated by the employer. In that case the worker may claim compensation as laid down by the ERiA for unjustified dismissal.

95. To avoid unfair treatment and/or decisions against workers regarding the protection and preservation of their employment, the ERiA provides that no employer shall terminate the employment of a worker on the basis of discriminatory practice. Thus section 38(1) of the ERiA provides that an agreement shall not be terminated by an employer by reason of:

- A worker's race, colour, caste, national extraction, social origin, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, sex, sexual orientation, HIV status, marital status or family responsibilities;
- A worker becoming or being a member of a trade union, seeking or holding of trade union office, or participating in trade union activities outside working hours or, with the consent of the employer, within working hours;
- The worker's filing in good faith of a complaint, or participating in proceedings against an employer involving alleged breach of any terms and conditions of employment;
- A worker's exercise of any of the rights provided for in the ERiA or other enactment, or in such agreement, or collective agreement or award.

96. Concerning workers' fundamental rights, section 13 of the Constitution guarantees the "freedom of association" of every citizen to establish, join and form part of any organization for the protection of his interests. This fundamental right is further entrenched as a legal right under section 29 of the ERiA.

- Every worker shall have the right:
    - To establish or join, as a member, a trade union of his own choice, without previous authorisation and without distinction whatsoever or discrimination of any kind including discrimination as to occupation, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, colour, race, religion, HIV status, national extraction, social origin, political opinion or affiliation;
    - To take part, outside working hours or with the consent of the employer within working hours, in the lawful activities of a trade union of which he is a member;
    - To seek, subject to the rules of the trade union of which he is a member, appointment or election as an officer of that trade union.
- Any provision of a contract of employment or a collective agreement, which seeks to restrain a worker from exercising any right under the EReA, shall be null and void;
- No employer shall restrain a worker from exercising his rights under this section.

97. Section 31 of the EReA further guarantees the above rights, in ensuring that adequate protection is given to workers, including migrant workers, against any form of discrimination and victimization. It provides as follows:

- No person shall:
  - Require another person:
    (i) Seeking employment not to join a trade union of his own choice;
    (ii) To give up membership of a trade union;
    (iii) Not to exercise any right under this Act; or
    (iv) Not to participate in any proceedings taken or held for the purposes of this Act.
  - Discriminate against, victimise or otherwise prejudice:
    (i) A person seeking employment because of his past, present or anticipated membership of a trade union, or his participation in the formation of a trade union;
    (ii) A worker for his failure or refusal to perform an act which he may not law fully require that worker to do, or for disclosing any information that the worker is lawfully entitled or required to disclose to another person, or for his involvement in trade union activities.
- A person who contravenes subsection (1) shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine' not exceeding 100,000 rupees. In order to deter, curb any act of interference or to terminate the employment of workers on the basis of discrimination or union activities the legislation has provided a further protection to that effect. Section 46(5B) of the ERiA provides that in the case of a worker whose employment has been terminated on ground of discriminatory practices or union activities, the Court shall order that that worker:
  - Be reinstated in his former employment with payment of remuneration from the date of the termination of his employment to the date of his reinstatement; or
  - Be paid severance allowance in accordance with provisions of the ERiA.

98. The Inspection and Enforcement Section (IES) of the MLIRT is responsible, among others for carrying out full-scale inspections at workplaces in order to ensure compliance with the provisions of the labour legislation as well as to detect and sanction any infringement or breaches of the provisions of the law. The IES is also concerned about carrying out enquiries into complaints made by workers at its 17 regional labour offices. Officers based in these regional labour offices strive to resolve the complaints between the parties concerned, otherwise the unsettled bona fide cases are lodged for determination by the Industrial Court.

99. The "Special Migrant Workers Unit" (SMWU) which has been in operation since November 1999, has been revamped and renamed the "Flying Squad". It is responsible for ensuring compliance, particularly on the terms and conditions of employment of migrant workers in Mauritius, to ensure that their fundamental rights are being respected and that they are employed on terms and conditions that are not less favourable than those of their local counterparts. This is done mainly through:

- Verifying and vetting of their contracts of employment prior to their arrival in Mauritius;

- Carrying out of routine inspections and follow up visits at the enterprises at regular intervals to see to it that terms and conditions of employment as per their vetted contract of employment are being strictly complied with;
- Verifying that migrant workers are fully conversant with the terms and conditions of their vetted contract of employment;
- Verifying that there exists an efficient means of communication at the level of the enterprise where their grievances may be discussed and settled as appropriate;
- Education sessions in the course of inspection visits to inform them of their rights and responsibilities;
- Registering of complaints regarding breach of provisions of the legislations or any term and conditions of employment of their vetted contract of employment or any other issues regarding their conditions of work in Mauritius;
- Issuing compliance notice "Recommendation" where employers have failed to take corrective remedial actions to address grievances and other complaints within a reasonable delay;
- Thereafter, initiating civil action or criminal prosecution against defaulting employers who has failed to comply with the above notice.

100. In order to reinforce and create more awareness among the various stakeholders on the labour legislation issues, the Information, Education and Communication Unit of the MLIRT conducts regular talks and seminars at workplaces, at the level of the Ministry as well on radios or television for the benefits of workers, trade unions representatives and employers.

101. With the coming into operation of the National Minimum wage, wage inequality and employment in the manufacturing sector will be addressed.

Health

102. Section 235 of the Criminal Code criminalises the unlawful termination of pregnancy in any form whatsoever. The Criminal Code was amended in 2012 to provide for the termination of pregnancy in specified circumstances, namely:

- In cases where the mother's life is endangered;
- In cases where medical diagnosis indicates that the continued pregnancy may lead to permanent injury to the physical and mental health of the mother;
- In cases of severe malformation of the foetus which will affect its viability and compatibility with life, as assessed by appropriate specialists;
- In cases where the pregnancy has not exceeded its 14th week and results from a case of rape, sexual intercourse with a female under the age of 16 years or sexual intercourse with a specified person which has been reported to the police or a medical practitioner.

103. Specialists in obstetrics and gynaecology who are registered under the Medical Council Act are authorized to provide treatment to terminate a pregnancy in a prescribed institution.

Cases treated as inpatient in Government General Hospitals due to complications following abortion 2010–2017[1]

	2010	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017 (Jan-June)*
<15 yrs	2	7	2	1	5	6	4	2
15–19 yrs	150	135	132	121	137	106	98	53
20–24	341	344	346	283	296	304	252	130
25–29	366	312	305	262	305	307	314	135
30–34	272	283	295	225	265	260	232	84
35–39	176	175	149	143	192	204	159	87
40–44	90	64	54	62	68	68	59	33
45–49	17	11	10	6	8	4	7	2
50 yrs +	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	1
All ages	**1 412**	**1 331**	**1 293**	**1 104**	**1 276**	**1 260**	**1 125**	**527**

Source: MOHQL.

104. Skilled medical aid/post abortive care is provided by consultants and senior specialists at hospital level, through medical and/or surgical management as appropriate. If required, cases are also referred to psychologists and medical social workers for further support.

105. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life (MOHQL) has on going awareness campaigns on unwanted pregnancies and teenage pregnancies at the antenatal and postnatal clinics of Government Health Service Points. There are also ad hoc sensitization campaigns that are carried out in secondary schools.

Republic of Mauritius — Live births among teenagers — 2010-2016*

Livebirths among mothers by age group (years)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Under 10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10–14	23	25	18	30	29	27	26
15–19	1 593	1 530	1 493	1 294	1 170	1 107	1 111
Total livebirths among mothers < 20 years	**1 616**	**1 555**	**1 511**	**1 324**	**1 199**	**1 134**	**1 137**

Source: Statistics Mauritius.

106. Family planning is provided at the level of both hospital and Primary Health Care (Mediclinic, Area Health Care Centres and Community Health Centres). In addition to medical check-ups, both counselling and provision of modern forms of contraception such as condoms, contraceptive pills, intra-uterine device, are made available to individuals. On-going preventive measures and screening sessions are carried out among key affected populations, namely Female Sex workers (FSW), Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) and People Who Inject Drugs (PWIDs). Outreach sessions for FSW are conducted in hot spots. Preventive Packages consist of condoms, gels, testing and HIEC materials. Capacity building of FSWs and psychosocial support are being carried out in collaboration with NGO Parapli Rouz/PILS. A referral

[1] Not specified whether they are spontaneous/induced or safe/unsafe.

and counselling system is in place for contraception for all women including FSW. Awareness sessions are also conducted in rehabilitation youth centres, correctional youth centres and youth centres.

107. The AIDS Unit is intensifying its efforts on the prevention of HIV and AIDS, particularly amongst teenage girls. The MOHQL will continue to target youngsters in and out of school settings, youth centres and outreach sessions. So far, there are more men than women who have HIV/AIDS, as indicated in the table below.

Data disaggregated by sex on HIV on new cases detected in the past five years

	Mauritian only		
Year	*Man*	*Woman*	*Both sexes*
2013	151	109	260
2014	190	132	322
2015	155	107	262
2016	190	129	319
2017	224	144	368
Cumulative number of cases including death since first case in 1987	**5 285**	**1 754**	**7 039**

Source: MOHQL.

108. With regard to the status on all measures adopted and their impact to implement the National Plan to combat HIV/AIDS, there is:

Commitment at National Level:

109. Various national multi-sectoral strategic plans have been elaborated and implemented namely: National Strategic Framework (NSF) (i) 2001–2005 (ii) 2006–2011 (iii) 2012–2016. The National HIV and AIDS Action Plan (NAP) 2018–2022 is in the process of validation.

HIV Testing and Counselling (HTC):

110. The laboratory services are an essential component in the response to the HIV epidemic. The concept of HIV testing through Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs) has been widely accepted by the population in general with around 19,400 rapid tests performed during the course of the year 2017 compared to 14,500 in 2014, showing a 25 per cent increase. Furthermore, 110,720 tests (ELISA and rapid tests) have been carried out by the Virology in 2017. A total of 112,281 tests have been carried out in 2015.

111. To upscale HIV testing and counselling during outreach programmes among the hard to reach population, 70 social and peer educators from different NGOs have been trained on HIV RDTs techniques was organized by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life (National AIDS Secretariat) in collaboration with AIDS Unit and Virology Department. The programme is on-going.

112. Provider Initiated Testing and Counselling (PITC) through Area Health Centres, Community Health Centres and outpatient/ inpatients departments are being carried out by the AIDS Unit.

HIV Tests carried out by the Virology Laboratory services:

113. The Central Virology is an important partner in the fight against HIV and AIDS. HIV tests carried out by the Virology Laboratory Services of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and positivity rates are as follows:

Year		*No. of HIV Tests*
2017	Elisa	Rapid Tests
Government	87 329	19 401
Private Lab	1 752	
NGO		2 238
Total		**110 720**

Source: MOHQL.

114. To facilitate access, HIV services have been decentralized from four points of care (Volcy Pougnet, Victoria Hospital, JNH, SSRNH) to eight Day Care Centres for the Immuno suppressed. As from April 2016 these services are now also being provided at Flacq Hospital, Mahebourg Hospital, Dr Yves Cantin Community Hospital and Souillac Hospital. A total of 4,921 patients are being followed at the Day Care Centres out of which 2,690 are adherents to ARV treatment. Most facilities are available at the seven points of care in the prison settings. As at December 2017, 392 prison inmates were being followed in prison settings out of which 304 are on ART, while 301 prison inmates are on methadone substitution therapy. ART Coverage was 62.2 per cent in 2017. With the implementation of the Test and Treat Strategy there will be a consequent increase in coverage. As Mauritius is a welfare state, health access including HIV services are free to all citizens.

115. Compliance with treatment related to UN Fast Track 90-90-90 targets by 2020 in order to eliminate AIDS by 2030 includes a policy to 'TREAT ALL' (irrespective of immune status). All those diagnosed with HIV are provided with treatment. TREAT ALL has been implemented from 1st August 2017 as the national HIV protocol including new ARV drugs (dolutegravir, darunavir) as first line treatment to improve compliance has been updated and is awaiting validation. The National Response has been effective due to multi-sectoral strategies implementation:

- Behavioural change programme for different targets groups;
- Upscaling of HIV testing / Provider initiated as well as Voluntary Testing and Pre/Post Test Counselling;
- Provision of antiretroviral therapy regularly reviewed as per WHO recommendations, diagnosis and prompt management of STIs;
- Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) (B+ option as from 2011). Mauritius has adopted and implemented the Option B+ of the WHO PMTCT programme: provision of lifelong ART to all pregnant women as from 12 weeks of pregnancy;
- Breastfeeding is contraindicated in Mauritius, formula milk is provided free of user cost till the new-borns reach 2 years of age;
- New-borns exposed to HIV are on prophylactic ART for 4 to 6 weeks. This reduces the risk of transmission to less than 1 per cent;
- The prevalence of HIV among pregnant women has been stabilized as per live birth indicators among pregnant women. High risk pregnant women are being

followed till delivery. Enrolment of HIV positive pregnant women on the PMTCT is 96.23 per cent in 2017;

- Teenage HIV infected pregnant girls are offered all facilities provided by the HIV services. They are provided with psychosocial support through social workers of public institutions and those of NGOs;
- Early Infant Diagnosis (EID) is carried out through PCR at 3 and 6 months of age. This leads to earlier ART initiation for those infected and reduces the rate of mortality and morbidity among infected infants and children. HIV infected newborns/children and exposed infants are being followed by Paediatricians at Volcy Pougnet, Victoria Hospital Day Care Centre and SSRN;
- Psychosocial support (Financial aid as per health situation);
- Promotion and distribution of male and female condoms;
- Better legal environment year 2006–2007 (HIV Act 2006 to reduce Stigma and Discrimination);
- Harm reduction services year 2006–2007;
- Blood supply safety;
- Post Exposure Prophylaxis;
- Infection control in health care settings.

116. The MOHQL in collaboration with the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire, Reunion has trained twelve (12) doctors in the Diplôme Universitaire HIV and AIDS and Hepatitis C. Capacity building of health care workers on the management of PLHIV, reduction of stigma and discrimination is ongoing. A series of continuous educational workshops have been held for the health care personnel as well as non-health professionals. There is also capacity building of patients and community in primary and secondary prevention through treatment literacy to improve adherence.

117. The MOHQL has adopted and is implementing the 2015 WHO HIV treatment guidelines. To this end, it carries out continuous advocacy to:

- Pre-Exposure Prophylactic Treatment (PrEP) for those at substantial risk for HIV;
- Monitoring and Evaluation of all HIV services;
- Continuous updating of Management of PLHIV as recommended by WHO Guidelines.

Disadvantaged groups of women

118. The Mauritian Welfare State covers free health care, education and a Basic Retirement Pension (BRP) to all its citizens. The Constitution of Mauritius protects the fundamental fights and freedom of individuals and ensures that no person is treated in any discriminatory manner. There exists no discrimination between urban and rural women as the latter benefit from various services which are often decentralized and easily accessible. The Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (MSIEE) endeavours to promote socioeconomic development for vulnerable women in all its empowerment policies/programmes. Data on female-headed households and female beneficiaries eligible under the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM) and benefitting from empowerment schemes of the MSIEE is highlighted in the table below:

	Male	*Female*	***Total***
Number of households	6 401	3 969	**10 370**
Number of beneficiaries	19 101	21 884	**40 985**

Source: MSIEE — January 2018.

119. There is a slightly higher number of women beneficiaries than men, indicating that there are more women in economically deprived situations.

120. The tables below provide statistics women in Mauritius who may find themselves in more disadvantaged situations.

Number of widows compared to total female population by age-group, Republic of Mauritius, Mid-Year 2016

	Year 2016		
Age group (years)	*Number of widows*	*Total female population*	*% widows*
15–19	2	48 270	0.0
20–24	33	49 402	0.1
25–29	179	44 677	0.4
30–34	400	44 035	0.9
35–39	1 016	49 478	2.1
40–44	1 657	42 106	3.9
45–49	3 145	43 009	7.3
50–54	5 678	48 432	11.7
55–59	7 780	42 079	18.5
Total	**19 890**	**411 488**	**4.8**

Source: Statistics Mauritius.

Estimated statistics of elderly women

	June 2016	
Age group (years)	*Female*	*%*
60–69	63 879	58.9
70–84	37 594	34.6
85+	7 013	6.5
Total	**108 486**	**100**

Source: Statistics Mauritius.

Disabled population by age and sex, 2011 Population Censuses

	Census 2011			
Age group	*Male*	*Female*	*Both sexes*	*% Female*
0–14	2 264	1 592	3 856	5.2
15–44	7 543	5 576	13 119	18.1
45–59	8 767	7 281	16 048	23.6

	Census 2011			
Age group	Male	Female	Both sexes	% Female
60–74	6 411	8 344	14 755	27.0
75+	4 002	8 088	12 090	26.2
All ages	**28 987**	**30 881**	**59 868**	**100.0**

Source: Statistics Mauritius

121. Measures taken to address discrimination against disadvantaged groups of women include:

Access to justice

122. The Government has enacted a series of legislations to protect the human rights and women's rights as well as ensuring the protection of disadvantaged groups of women (including rural women; elderly women and women with disabilities). Moreover, the Constitution makes provision under section 17 for redress to be afforded by the Supreme Court to any individual whose rights under Chapter II (which provides for fundamental rights and freedom) have been, are being or are likely to be contravened.

123. The Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development (MSSNSESD) (Social Security Division) has a Disability Unit which is responsible for promoting and protecting the rights and welfare of people living with disabilities. Women with Disabilities are more vulnerable to all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse including in the workplace, educational institutions, the home and other setting. Women with disabilities experience multiple discrimination based both on their gender and their disability.

124. The Protection of Elderly Persons Act provides a legal and administrative framework to ensure that adequate protection is available to older people (be it physical, verbal, mental, emotional or material).

125. An Elderly Watch for different regions which has as objectives to promote the welfare of elderly persons, provide support to families that need assistance and protection for elderly persons, endeavour to prevent acts of abuse on elderly persons and report cases of repeated abuse of an elderly person to the Protection of Elderly Persons Unit.

126. An Elderly Persons' Protection Unit operating within the MSSNSESD is responsible for raising public awareness on the rights of the elderly, receives complaints and applies to the court for a protection order where there is real danger to the life of the elderly person.

127. The Mental Health Care Act ensures that persons with mental disabilities have access to health.

Education

128. The Gender Unit of the MGECDFW is mandated to implement policies and programmes pertaining to the social, economic and political empowerment of women. These are carried out through its network of 15 Women Empowerment Centres scattered over the island. Over the years, activities ranging from training courses to Information, Education and Communication campaigns through talks; seminars and film/documentaries projection on various women's issues have been organised for the empowerment of the womenfolk.

129. The National Women's Council has implemented an Adult Literacy Programme since 1986. This programme aims to equip women who have little or no formal education with basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy in order to enhance their ability to cope with the challenges of their daily lives.

Health Care Services:

130. The MOHQL ensures that everyone has access to health care in the public hospitals and its area health centres scattered over the island. At present, there are some 23 Area Health Centres and 130 Community Health Centres providing health promotion, health education, family planning and primary health care diagnostic and treatment services.

131. Other health care services for disadvantaged women are as follows:

- Social Aid to widows; disabled women and elderly women;
- Provision of free wheelchairs, spectacles and hearing aids (financial support for the purchase of prosthesis);
- Domiciliary (Physician) care home visiting program for those aged 90;
- Provision of a Carers Allowance for severely disabled and dependent persons;
- Free flu vaccination program for older people;
- Moreover, ongoing awareness-raising campaigns are held to educate women about health issues.

Income Generating Opportunities

132. The National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWEC), a parastatal body operating under the aegis of the MGECDFW provides various services to women in order to promote economic empowerment of women and encourage the development and growth of women entrepreneurs. These comprise information dissemination and sensitisation programmes; counselling; referrals to relevant institutions; international linkage development (trade fairs, workshop); training; marketing; incubator facilities and local fairs.

133. Each year Social Welfare Centres empower some 3000 non-working women through skills development courses with a view to helping them become economically independent.

134. In parallel, other institutions such as the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), Enterprise Mauritius, the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives and the Development Bank of Mauritius offer other services and opportunities so that women can have a whole package of facilities. Women are encouraged to run their own enterprises and accordingly, Government provides incentives and facilities to women through various institutions.

Climate change

135. The significance of gender mainstreaming has been recognised and provisions for gender consideration in studies on climate change have been made in the forthcoming Climate Change Bill. Additionally as per the Mauritius' Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC), coordination of the INDC plans, programmes and projects for both adaptation and mitigation actions will be under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD) and will involve the participation of all stakeholders (Sectoral Ministries, Private

Sector, CBOs/NGOs, women's organisations, etc.). Gender has also been dealt as a cross cutting issue in the National Climate Change Adaptation Policy Framework for the Republic of Mauritius which was formulated under the Africa Adaptation Programme (AAP). The Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions for Low Carbon Island Development Strategy (NAMA) project will also take into account gender aspects and impacts. In this regard, a gender expert would be recruited under the NAMA project. Partnership initiatives have resulted in a number of major breakthroughs such as empowerment of women communities, installation of rainwater harvesting systems in women centres, promotion of medicinal plants with women communities, contribution of women in the national tree planting campaigns and training of trainers' programmes with women leaders to raise awareness on climate change.

136. The establishment of working relationship with the MGECDFW in addressing the issue of gender impact is seen as strategic. The MSSNSESD is fully incorporating the gender dimension of climate change in awareness raising activities, targeting as well as involving women as agents of change in our on-going mitigation and adaptation programmes. Six awareness-raising campaigns have been conducted in 2016/17 in collaboration with the NWC and women's associations. Additionally, the MSSNSESD is developing a "Guide pour la famille" which illustrates practical actions at household level, focusing on the particular roles of women, which can be taken to combat climate change.

137. The following measures have also been taken by the MSSNSESD:

- A Climate Change Information Centre (CCIC) has been set up in July 2013. This centre provides consolidated information on climate change which is accessible to the general public including women, students and NGOs;
- The CCIC also has a webpage which is easily accessible from the Ministry's website. It provides online access to consolidated information and reports on climate change to the public in general including women, students, youth, and senior citizens. The CCIC webpage also has a specific section dedicated for gender known as "Gender mainstreaming of climate change". Some 17, 200 visitors accessed the CCIC webpage.
- Implementation of a Climate Change Information, Education and Communication Strategy and Action Plan to enhance access of information on climate change to the public through awareness raising and education.

(a) Over 100,000 people from civil society in particular youth, women and community organisations have been sensitized between 2014 and 2017. Women's participation exceeded 50 per cent.

- A pool of 70 woman leaders were trained to conduct awareness raising on climate change and some 2 600 participants were sensitized in climate change and its gendered impacts under the Africa Adaptation Programme;
- A women's forum on climate change for the African region was held in 2016 and same was attended by 350 local and foreign participants including scientists, policy makers and business leaders from Africa, Europe and Asia;
- An awareness raising during World Environment Day celebrations;
- Capacity building for youths (Mauritius, Rodrigues, Comoros, Mayotte and Seychelles) on 'Changements Climatiques et Protection de l'Environnement' was held from 27-30 June 2017. 60 participants attended including 35 women.

(b) The following materials have been produced by the MSSNSESD:

- Training Manuals have been formulated for target groups such as youth and women;
- A Toolkit containing 111 Actions to help Combat Climate Change in Mauritius have been formulated to inspire, inform and involve youth, family, women in taking actions on climate change. Some 600 youth leaders have been trained on climate change (including some 354 young ladies);
- A manual on climate change for teachers of primary and secondary schools has been prepared under the Africa Adaptation Programme. Some 750 teachers (including lady teachers) have been trained.

- Under the 'Capacity Development on Climate Change in the Republic of Mauritius' project (2014–2016), with the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), four innovative and customized climate change sensitization materials have been developed, namely:
  - A climate change video clip;
  - An interactive 3D digital model, to help citizens understand the impacts on coastal zone due to sea level rise and storm surges;
  - A climate change card game which is a self and group learning tool for climate change terminologies;
  - Nine climate change imaginary island depiction panels illustrating the causes and consequences of climate change and the possible solutions to these problems;
  - Three official training sessions for 30 educators and headmasters (including 13 women), 25 youth cadres (including 10 young ladies) and 65 women and four awareness raising sessions for 45 farmers (including 30 women), 40 senior citizens (including 32 women), 30 working adults (including 10 women) and the general public (over 10 000 people including some 6000 women) have been carried out.
- Refocusing the awareness raising strategy for grassroot levels stakeholders through measures such as:
  - Mobile Graphic Exhibition (bus) on climate change which was put on display at schools, Municipal Councils, District Councils, Social Centres and Commercial Centres around the island from April–October 2012;
  - A programme for climate change education and public awareness where more than 17,000 persons (including women) have been outreached through an innovative approach using 'classroom on wheel' concept, popularly known as 'Bis Lamer' since its launching in 2014.
- Climate Change Knowledge Fair under the AAP which was also attended by women organisations and training sessions by experts.

138. The following projects are also being implemented for climate change adaptation.

Under the Adaptation Fund Board

139. Development and implementation of an Early Warning System (EWS) for storm surges for Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega. The EWS was implemented in the context of the Climate Change Adaptation Programme in the coastal zone of Mauritius to increase the climate resilience of the coastal communities and funded by the Adaptation Fund and supported by the United Nations Development Programme. The aim was to focus on development of an EWS for incoming storm surge manned on a

24hr/day basis such that coastal communities in the Republic of Mauritius are able to safely evacuate prior to future storm surge events. The immediate cause to develop such a system was the need to have a high-quality tailor-made forecasting system to enable more effective preparedness and issuing of alerts. Storm surges are expected to be aggravated through sea level rise and climate change effects on weather patterns. This will compound underlying trends of increasing coastal erosion and pressure on scarce land resources, and increase physical vulnerability of island populations, infrastructure and livelihood assets. The Republic of Mauritius is the first Small Island Developing State (SIDS) with its own tide and storm surge Early-Warning System for improving preparedness and resilience to extreme events like storms surges especially for the coastal populations. The latter refer specially to women whose roles are often confined to household labour, and such as looking after children and elderly people, as well as saving properties from damages in case of extreme weather events in coastal regions.

140. Constructing a Refuge Centre at Quatre Soeurs. The Coastal Community of Quatre Soeurs is located in a low-lying area and is highly at risk of flooding due to high tides, storm surges and other calamities. The livelihood of the community is further exacerbated by the adverse effects of climate change, which could lead to more complex environmental and social consequences. Under the Adaptation Fund Project, a Refuge Centre is being constructed to demonstrate best adaptation practice in the face of climate change. An approximate area of 1000 square metre is being constructed to serve as an emergency escape haven from frequent flooding and demonstrate infrastructure alternatives to minimize flooding risk in the future. Mauritius is the first Small Island Developing States in the Indian Ocean to build a refuge centre. Women are particularly vulnerable to natural hazards whereas men's roles often include working outside the house and hence are more likely to escape natural hazards. As such, this refuge centre will increase climate resilience of communities and livelihoods in coastal areas.

141. Public awareness campaigns on climate change adaptation:

- Development of Interactive tools for public awareness campaigns:
    - Seven 3D small scale ecosystem models for coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves and wetlands and 3 interactive climate change models depicting the region of Mon Choisy, Riviere des Galets and SEMPA marine Park;
    - 1 Magnetic game;
    - 1 Quiz game;
    - 1 Goose game;
    - A climate change game electronic game application that can be downloaded online (Apple Store) called SMART Mauritius.
- Public Awareness Campaigns in collaboration with NGOs:
    - The public awareness campaigns are conducted in collaboration with Reef Conservation (NGO) in a mobile classroom 'Bis Lamer'. The sensitization campaigns are focused on importance of natural coastal and marine habitats and the effects of climate change on coastal communities, the impact on the environment. The 'Bis Lamer' travels around Mauritius including coastal communities, primary schools, secondary schools, sensitizing fishermen communities, women's groups, general public, governmental and private organisations. Since 2014 than 17,000 people have been sensitized under the programme in matters of climate change and coastal adaptation using the marine mobile education unit.

142. Enhancing the livelihood of women at Grand Sable in response to climate change impacts:

- In the context of the Adaptation Fund Project 'Climate Change Adaptation Programme in the Coastal Zone of Mauritius', a project entitled 'Enhancing the livelihood of women at Grand Sable in response to climate change impacts' was implemented in collaboration with the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme and Australian AID. The objective was to empower women community on alternative income-generating activities and carry out sensitization awareness campaign on the prevention of coastal erosion through mangrove propagation. It was a Community Based Approach project to enhance resilience of coastal community of Grand Sable, help locals specially women towards alternative Livelihoods (Self-Employment) and promote women empowerment in the region of Grand Sable. The Grand Sable Women Planters Farmers Entrepreneurs Association (GSWPFEA) is the local association which was created to achieve the objectives. They have been involved in various projects such as:
    - Train the Trainers program for the community on mangrove propagation;
    - Talks on mangrove benefits (Sensitization Campaign);
    - Design and construction of display boards on mangrove and climate change & promotional Items;
    - Production of Cloth Bags.

143. Additional Activities currently undertaken with UNDP GEF by the GSWPFEA are:

- Seaweed Farming and development of seaweed derived products (soaps, pickles and jams). This project activity included community mapping, capacity building and implementation of farm, observation and monitoring of seaweed growth and development of seaweed derived products (soap, pickles and jam);
- Vetiver, Ayapana, Citronelle and Cassava Cultivation. The cultivation of Vetiver around the fields as a measure to control run-off.

National Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Emergency Alert System by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre

144. The National Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Emergency Alert System (EWEAS) should provide a reliable high performance system together with the necessary infrastructure (where required) to disseminate warnings and alerts to a maximum number of people and stakeholders in the Republic of Mauritius within an acceptable time frame by broadcasting warning and alerting messages through a number of channels namely but are not limited to telecom networks (mobile/landline), television & radio, the Internet (including social media), display signs and public broadcasting systems (e.g. sirens). The system will cover Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega and St Brandon. The contract has been awarded to a Canadian firm, Baastel Ltée for consultancy services. A final report comprising full reports of assessments, recommendations (regulatory, legal and technical), costs estimate for implementation in 2 distinct phases as well as technical specifications was submitted. Financial clearance for the implementation of the project is being awaited.

145. Public awareness campaigns on Disaster Risk Reduction include:

- Public awareness campaigns by Mauritius Meteorological Service. The Mauritius Meteorological Services (MMS) had actively participated in the Project 'Your Safety: Our Concern' in 2017. This project was spearheaded by the MGECDFW. For this project, an intense awareness campaign was carried

out, targeting women from both the urban and rural areas. Talks were given by the officials of the MMS at all the Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) on topics related to Climate change, Natural Disaster and Early warning system. In addition to this, the MMS receives around 5000 visitors yearly. 80 per cent of the visitors are primary school students. The rest consists mostly of secondary and tertiary students;

- Public awareness campaigns by the Beach Authority. The Beach Authority has been participating together with various stakeholders in the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee relating to cyclone, torrential rain, landslide, tsunami, high waves and earthquakes emergency schemes for the benefit of the inhabitants of concerned regions which include amongst others, women.

Switch Africa Green Project

146. The SWITCH Africa Green project has been developed and funded by the European Union to support African countries in their transition to an inclusive green economy and in promoting a shift to Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) patterns and practices. UNEP, in collaboration with UNDP and UNOPS, is implementing the SWITCH Africa Green Project covering 7 pilot countries Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Uganda and Ethiopia. The project has three components: Policy Support, Green Business Development and Networking Facility. The Republic of Mauritius has identified three areas of intervention namely Agriculture, Manufacturing and Tourism and with cross cutting issues referring to energy and water efficiency, labelling and standards, eco-innovation and sustainable trade.

Green Business Development

147. The Green business development component of the project aims at supporting the transition towards an inclusive green economy by providing grants to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Grant projects focus on empowering MSMEs to capture market opportunities for resource efficient green goods and services and support local green entrepreneurs starting up and developing green business ventures in the three identified key sectors.

148. Two projects from Rodrigues specifically target women's groups and aim at empowering them to create sustainable livelihoods for themselves based on green business ventures.

149. Project 1: Increase capacity building of the fisher's community of Rodrigues through training for the bio-cultivation of the Combava lime plants and its chilli paste. This project aims at providing training and capacity building to 40 fisherwomen and supporting them in creating sustainable and green alternative livelihoods. The beneficiaries are provided with training and capacity building in bio cultivation of Combava plants and the production of agro-products, including chilli paste. Through these activities, the fisher women community are being empowered to set up sustainable green enterprises with a fixed income. Training on bio-cultivation has already been carried out and the beneficiaries are now being provided with the necessary skills to develop value-added products, including the chilli paste, from the Combava plant.

150. Project 2: Developing capacity amongst Rodriguans to adopt green businesses through training to key stakeholders and the development of a green business guidebook. The main feature of the project is to explore the potential of green business development to empower women and reduce poverty through eco-entrepreneurship. To this end, training and capacity building are being provided

targeting some 750 potential entrepreneurs. The project aims at boosting the emergence of business ventures and encourage eco-innovation through the use of natural products in sectors such as handicraft making, green packaging, beauty parlours and spa, as well as recycling of waste to produce toys, decorative materials and soft toys. These activities will contribute to the setting up of green businesses and building sustainable livelihoods. Around 12 training sessions regrouping more than 600 entrepreneurs have already been organized.

151. A broad sensitization programme on sustainable development has been developed with the women community. For the year 2017, 32 talks were delivered to women's organisations and 1,720 women have been sensitized. Talks are delivered on environmental issues such as: sustainable development, sustainable consumption and production, tree planting, solid waste and banning of plastics including climate change. During talks, emphasis on climate change is provided to women with a basic understanding of climate change as well as a series of practical measures and steps that they, as well as their family members, can adopt as part of their day to day activities as follows:

- What is climate change;
- Causes and impacts of climate change;
- Key actions to combat climate change (adaptation and mitigation measures) and amongst others.

152. Moreover, other sensitization programmes (talks in SWC, community centres and private institutions, celebration of major environmental events and exhibitions) have included women. About 204,050 women have been sensitized. In addition, the MSSNSESD in collaboration with the MGECDFW, has sensitized women and about 1,000 medicinal plants have been distributed in 15 Women Empowerment Centres to encourage the use of medicinal plants and promote a green culture. The Gender Unit designed and produced a pamphlet in 2012 entitled "Women and Climate Change". In addition, with the support of the Commonwealth of Learning, an interactive DVD on the Gendered Implications of Climate Change was developed in 2013 and a Training of Trainers Programme for the Officers of the NWC, Social Welfare Centres and Community Centres was conducted by the Gender Unit to enable them to disseminate the contents.

153. The NWC has organised short courses on "Women's Contribution to Climate Change", enabling women to contribute in finding ways to combat Climate Change. Programmes would then be implemented accordingly. Officers of the NWC and members from women's associations attended the Community Disaster Programme training which was organised by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre. The aim of the training was to train a group of volunteers residing in vulnerable areas to the basic techniques on fire safety, rope handling first aids, water rescue activities, basic camp management, team building, sand bagging and other basic techniques. They would be able to intervene in emergency situations pending the arrival of authorities.

Marriage and family relations

154. The Government of Mauritius had in the past set up a Commission to investigate the appropriateness of the Muslim Personal Law and its impact on women. However, a consensus could not be reached among the different schools of thought in the Muslim community. Given the social fabric of Mauritius and also given that section 16(4) of the Constitution makes provision for the existence of personal laws, this issue

is not a simple one on which a decision can be taken without giving the opportunity to relevant stakeholders to pronounce themselves upon.

155. The Code Civil Mauricien recognises intangible property. Moreover, there is no law dealing specifically with the distribution of future earning capacity and human capital. As regards the Divorce and Judicial Separation Act or the Civil Code on the matter, the law does not distinguish between male or female. There are no specific legal provisions regarding the dissolution of de facto relationships.

Additional information

156. The Concluding Remarks were disseminated to all Gender Focal Points of all Ministries, who have the responsibility to share the contents and follow-up with departments/units/sections/parastatals falling under their purview. The line Ministry has also to the best of its endeavours, tried to implement the said recommendations. Cabinet was also apprised of the contents of the Concluding Remarks.

157. Specific training on CEDAW has been carried out by IJLS for judges, magistrates and lawyers in February 2018.

158. The Constitution of Mauritius, which is the supreme law of the land advocates equality of men and women. Therefore temporary special measures are not adopted as the laws of the country do not allow the exercise of positive discrimination. However, the State, to the best of its endeavours through policy and other measures, ensures that such measures help in achieving substantive equality of women and men.

159. Mauritius has already ratified/acceded to the following human rights instruments related to the rights of Women and Girls, namely:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (in 1984);
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (in 2008);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990);
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (in 2009);
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (in 2011);
- Mauritius ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) in June 2017.

160. Mauritius has signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure but has not yet ratified same.

161. The International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families is considered to be wider in scope in many respects compared to existing national legislation in Mauritius. Family members of migrant workers are not covered under Mauritian legislation except for those employed in technical, supervisory and managerial grades. Migrant workers are not allowed to be accompanied by their family members. Since the Convention also provides for the protection of families in respect of social security, health care and education, the decision to ratify the Convention will require extensive consultations with the relevant Ministries concerned and further, though its ratification is not envisaged at this point in time.

162. A Braille version of the Constitution of Mauritius is now available in public libraries, in schools for the blind and in tertiary institutions.

163. The Building Control Act was passed in 2012 repealing the Building Act in order to inter alia ensure that every building is constructed and maintained to guarantee people safety, society well-being, ensure accessibility to persons including people with impaired mobility and communication, elderly persons and pregnant women. Every building should also be gender compliant to ensure that gender-specific requirements are integrated in the building.

164. In 2015, Cabinet agreed to the setting up of a Ministerial Committee to make recommendations on electoral reforms, including: the introduction of a dose of proportional representation in the National Assembly, and guarantee better women representation; the mandatory declaration of community; anti-defection measures; the widening of the powers of the Electoral Supervisory Commission; the Financing of Political Parties Bill; and amendments to the electoral system in Rodrigues. Amendments have been brought to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, through the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Amendment) Act 2016.Concurrently, an amendment has been brought to the Constitution, through the Constitution (Amendment No. 2) Act 2016 to make provision for a minimum number of candidates for election to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to be of a particular sex, with a view to ensuring adequate representation of each sex in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Otherwise, at the beginning of May 2018, a Ministerial Committee under the chairmanship of the Minister Mentor has submitted its report which is currently under examination at the level of the Prime Minister's Office before submission to Cabinet.

165. The Social Integration and Empowerment Bill was passed in November 2016 to promote social integration and empowerment of persons living in absolute poverty with the philosophy of enhancing social justice and national unity. The Bill provided for the setting up of such empowerment programmes or schemes as may be necessary to:

- Combat absolute poverty;
- Provide support and other services to persons living in absolute poverty;
- Support persons living in absolute poverty to integrate the mainstream society.

166. The National Wage Council Bill was passed in the National Assembly in April 2016. The bill provided for the establishment of the National Wage Consultative Council which, in the discharge of its functions, be mainly responsible to make recommendations to Government regarding Minimum wage and the payment of additional remuneration to offset any increase in the cost of living every year with a view to improving the living conditions of workers.

167. The Sports Act 2016 came into force in January 2017 and calls for the setting up of the National Women's Sports Commission which has as objective the promotion of sports for women and school girls.

168. The National Women's Council Act 1985 was amended in April 2016 to provide for a more modern and appropriate legislative framework in order to further promote women's empowerment and gender equality, especially through the active participation of women in the social, economic and political fields.

169. The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has launched a web-based computer system for registration of reported cases of domestic violence in November 2016.The Domestic Violence Information System (DOVIS) is being implemented on a pilot basis at four Family Support Bureaux, operating under the aegis of the Ministry. The system allows for data harmonisation, easier record keeping and faster retrieval of information on domestic violence issues.

170. A Child Protection Register designed to provide an integrated database to record all cases of children in distress that are reported to the Child Development Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has been made operational. The main objectives of the Child Protection Register are, amongst others, to improve record keeping, and overall management of cases of children in distress, facilitate generation of statistical data for informed decision making, and ensure tracking and monitoring of relapse cases.

171. In 2018, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has obtained assistance from the European Union for the preparation of a Gender Equality Bill. To this end, consultations have been held with major stakeholders to prepare the draft bill.